

REMARKS

Claims 1, 6, 7 and 12 have been amended. Claims 2 and 8 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-12 are pending and under consideration. No new matter is presented in this Amendment. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 8, respectively and claims 2 and 8 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Objected claims 6 and 12 have been rewritten in independent form and are therefore in condition for allowance.

OBJECTION TO THE DRAWINGS:

Regarding the objection to the drawings, Applicants note that the claims have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Oka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,184,541).

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1 and 7, it is noted that claims 1 and 7 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 8, respectively and claims 2 and 8 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 7 are allowable.

Regarding the rejection of claims 3-5 and 9-11, Applicants note that these claims depend from independent claims 1 and 7, respectively, and as noted above, claims 1 and 7 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3-5 and 9-11 are allowable at least due to their dependency from claims 1 and 7.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 2, 6, 8, and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

STEIN, MCEWEN & BUI, LLP

Date: 3/14/08

By: Douglas X. Rodríguez
Douglas X. Rodríguez
Registration No. 47,269

1400 Eye St., N.W.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 216-9505
Facsimile: (202) 216-9510